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By: 

Nancy Foster

PATENT APPLICATION

Customer Number: 22,852

Attorney Docket No. 4853.0072-00000

## IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

Norimasa OKUDA et al.

Serial No.: 09/870,483

Filed: June 1, 2001

Title: A METHOD FOR PRODUCING  
 $\alpha$ -HYDROXYCARBOXYLIC ACIDAssistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE

Applicants now respond to the Office Action dated December 17, 2001, the period for reply having been extended one month through April 17, 2002, with the attached Petition for Extension of Time and payment of the requisite fee. Please amend the application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 4, 5, 6, 10, and 12, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend claims 3 and 7 to read:

3. (Amended) The method for producing  $\alpha$ -hydroxycarboxylic acid according to claim 1, wherein the hydrolysis reaction is carried out using mineral acid selected from hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, boracic acid, phosphoric acid, and perchloric acid.